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*Supreme Court Justice  
William S. Cooper*



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### Kentucky Supreme Court Justice William S. Cooper to retire June 30

FRANKFORT, Ky., June 21, 2006 — After having served the Supreme Court of Kentucky since 1996, Justice William S. Cooper announced today that he will retire effective June 30, 2006. He represents the 2nd Supreme Court District, which is comprised of 14 counties in the mid-west region of Kentucky. Justice Cooper practiced law in Elizabethtown prior to serving as a circuit judge from 1979 to 1996. He was chief regional judge of the Green River Region during his last four years on the circuit bench.

Justice Cooper is a native of Elizabethtown, Ky., where he currently resides. He received both his bachelor's degree and juris doctor from the University of Kentucky where he graduated first in the law school class of 1970. He is a past president of the University of Kentucky Law Alumni Association and a 2001 inductee into the UK Law Alumni Hall of Fame.

He has served on numerous working committees including the Kentucky Council on Higher Education Subcommittee for Legal Education, the Committee on Justice and Corrections, and the Commission on Guardians ad Litem. He currently serves as chair of the Supreme Court Criminal Rules Committee and the Kentucky Evidence Rules Review Commission.

Justice Cooper is the author of several law journal articles and the Kentucky Instructions to Juries, Vol. 1 (Criminal). He was named a Charter Life Fellow of the Kentucky Bar Foundation in 1986 and received the 1992 Bar Center Award from the Kentucky Bar Association. He is an Air Force veteran and a member of the American Legion, Rotary International and the Knights of Columbus. His awards include the 1991 Community Service Award from the Knights of Columbus and the 1997 Hall of Fame Award from the Elizabethtown-Hardin County Chamber of Commerce.

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**Judicial Nominating Commission Process**

The Judicial Nominating Commission will follow the process outlined in the Kentucky Constitution to fill the vacancies being created by Justice Cooper and Deputy Chief Justice Martin E. Johnstone of the 4th Supreme Court District, who announced earlier this month that he will also retire June 30. The executive secretary of the Judicial Nominating Commission will send a vacancy notice to all attorneys in the affected Supreme Court districts. Attorneys can recommend someone or nominate themselves. Once that occurs, the individuals interested in the position return a questionnaire to the Office of Chief Justice. The Chief Justice of Kentucky will meet with the Judicial Nominating Commission to choose three nominees. When filling vacancies created by appellate judges, the Judicial Nominating Commission is comprised of members statewide.

The names of the applicants are not released. However, once the Judicial Nominating Commission has determined the names of the three finalists to be sent to the governor for selection, the names are made available to the public and the media. The credentials of these three nominees are sent to Gov. Ernie Fletcher for review. When the governor appoints the replacement, his office makes the announcement. The Judicial Nominating Commission is scheduled to meet June 26 regarding candidates for Justice Johnstone's position and in mid-July for Justice Cooper's position.

The Supreme Court is the state court of last resort and the final interpreter of Kentucky law. Seven justices sit on the Supreme Court and all seven justices rule on appeals that come before the court. The justices are elected from seven appellate districts and serve eight-year terms. The Supreme Court may order a ruling or opinion to be “published,” which means that the ruling becomes the case law governing all similar cases in the future in Kentucky.

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